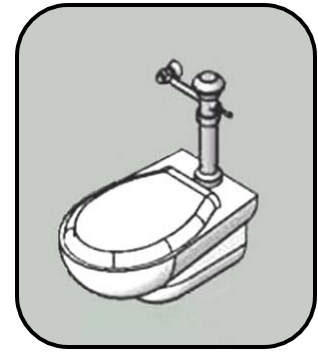




Single User Toilet Rooms

This guide explains requirements of the ADA and ABA Standards for single user toilet rooms. It is intended for use with a complete copy of the ADA or ABA Standards. Provisions of the standards are discussed and referenced but not reprinted in this supplementary document.

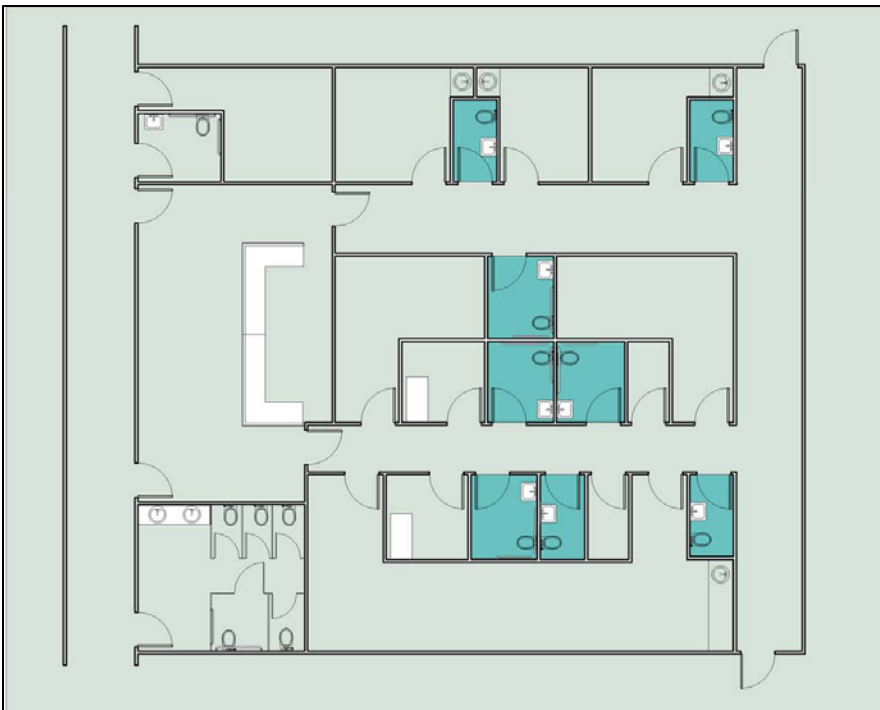


ACCESSIBLE TOILET ROOMS [§213]

The ADA and ABA Standards specify which toilet rooms must be accessible, but they do not require the number of toilet rooms that must be provided, which is usually addressed by plumbing or building codes. There is one condition where the standards require provision of a toilet room: in multi-story buildings exempt from the elevator requirement, a compliant toilet room is required on an accessible level if toilet rooms are provided on other floors.

In new construction, access is required to all public and common use toilet rooms, including those for employee use, except certain single user toilet rooms or units clustered in the same location:

- Portable units – 5% minimum at each location (those on construction sites for exclusive use by construction workers are not required to comply); and
- Single user toilet rooms – 50% minimum at each cluster.



“Clustered” single user toilet rooms are those grouped in the same area and serving the same users. For example, in a medical care suite (as shown here), they may be provided in proximity to exam rooms for use by patients. Single user toilet rooms outside the same area or suite (upper left) or intended for different users (e.g., employees or separate sexes), and multi-user toilet rooms (lower left) cannot be part of a cluster.

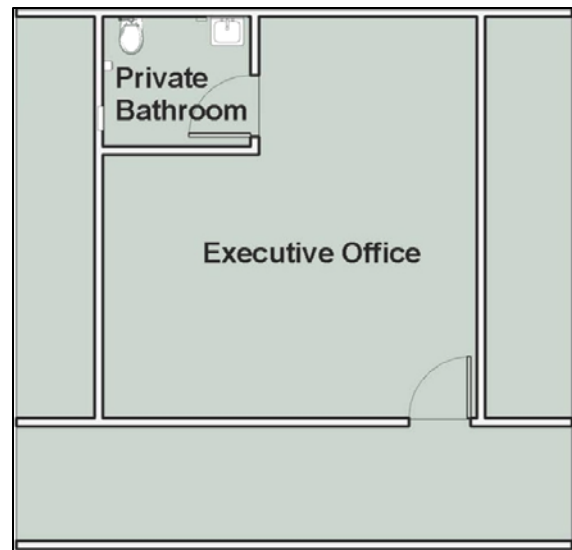
Example of Clustered Toilet Rooms

Private Toilet Rooms

Toilet rooms must be fully accessible. However, single user toilet rooms accessed only through a private office and intended for the private use of the occupant of that space are permitted certain adaptable features that allow full access to be provided as needed.

They include:

- later installation of grab bars (if walls are properly reinforced/ blocked) [§604.5]
- alternative toilet seat and lavatory heights [§604.4 and §606.3]
- removable base cabinetry at lavatories for later provision of knee and toe clearances [§606.2]
- door swing allowances where the swing can be reversed for compliance [§603.2.3]



Toilet Room Accessed Through a Private Office

Private toilet rooms with adaptable features must be sized for accessibility, including provision of fixture clearances and turning space. Under the standards, adaptive access does not encompass other allowances or permit reconfiguration of the space, such as moving walls.

Unisex or Family Toilet Rooms [§213.2]

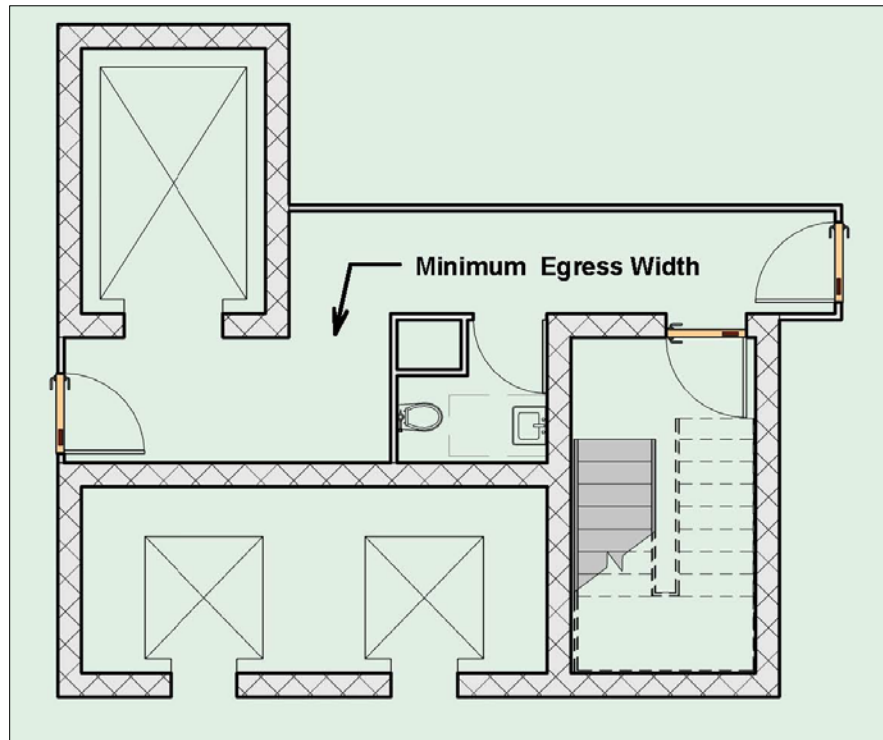
Unisex or family toilet rooms provided in addition to multi-user toilet rooms are a good idea, especially in high-traffic facilities, because of the benefits they offer users. The privacy they afford is helpful to people with attendants of the opposite sex and as well as to families with young children. However, in new construction they cannot substitute for access to provided multi-user toilet rooms. Where both unisex and multi-user types are provided, access is required to each. Only in alterations where access to existing multi-user restrooms is not technically feasible, can accessible unisex restrooms be provided as an alternative (if located in the same area). Under the standards, unisex toilet rooms cannot have more than one lavatory and two water closets (or one water closet and urinal).

Alterations [§202 and §213]

In alterations, access to toilet rooms is required according to the scope of work. The number of toilet rooms required to be accessible in an alteration is determined by how many are altered or added. If one toilet room on a floor is altered, the standards apply to that room. If all toilets rooms are altered, the standards apply to all that would be required to comply in new construction.

If an alteration is limited to changes or replacement of certain elements, such as a fixture and floor surfaces, these elements must comply, at a minimum. Work that is more extensive and involves alteration of the entire room typically triggers full compliance. Additional requirements may apply where alterations are made to a “primary function area” or to meet retrofit mandates of the ADA.

Compliance in alterations is required unless it is “technically infeasible.” As defined, this term pertains to physical or site constraints and structural conditions that prohibit compliance. For example, it may be technically infeasible in an alteration to enlarge a toilet room confined in size by structural supports, elevator shafts, mechanical rooms, stairways, or required egress routes not affected by the project. However, the concept of technical infeasibility remains relative to the planned scope of work. If the entire building is significantly renovated or gutted, constraints of this type would likely not exist.



Example of Technical Infeasibility: Limits on Toilet Room Size

Primary Function Areas and Path of Travel [§202.4]

Access to toilet rooms is required in alterations to primary function areas. Primary function areas are those spaces that contain a major activity for which a facility is intended, such as the dining area of a restaurant and the retail space of a store. When alterations are made to such areas, a “path of travel” is required as part of the work. The required path of travel includes a continuous route from site arrival and parking to the primary function area, as well as to toilet rooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the primary function area. Since this requirement may extend beyond the intended scope of work, a 20% cost cap is specified in ADA and ABA regulations (not the standards). These regulations, issued by other agencies, contain important details about this requirement and can be accessed through the Board’s website at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/guide.htm.

Qualified Historic Facilities [§202.5 and §213.2]

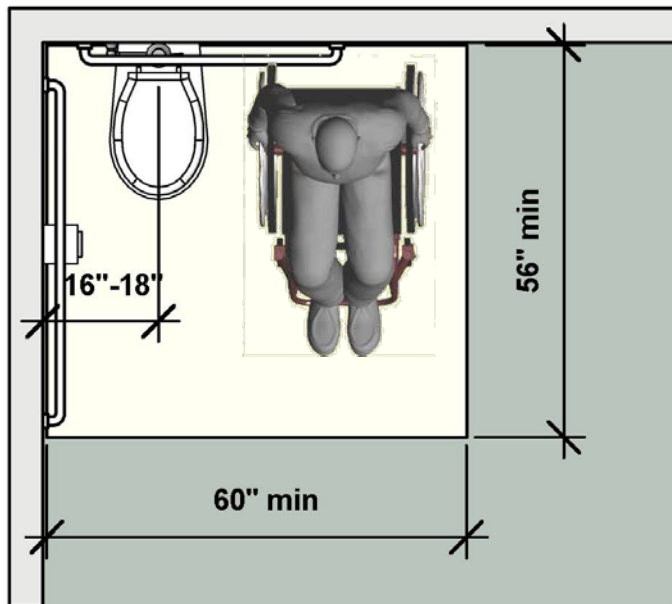
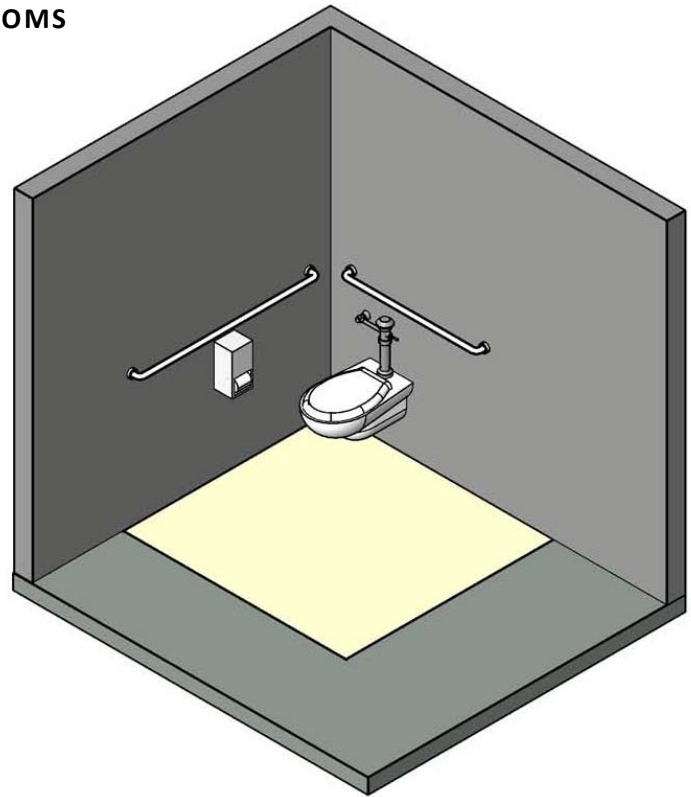
The standards contain exceptions for historic facilities on the national registry protected by the National Historic Preservation Act. These exceptions apply in the context of a planned alteration to a qualified facility. Where access to toilet rooms would threaten or destroy the historic integrity of a facility, the standards permit access to only one unisex toilet room or one men’s and women’s room at the facility.

COMPONENTS OF ACCESSIBLE TOILET ROOMS

Water Closets [§604]

Features of accessible water closets include:

- sufficient clear space for wheelchair positioning and transfer
- side and back grab bars
- corner placement and seat height to facilitate transfer and use of grab bars
- flush controls that are accessible and reachable from the open side
- accessible toilet paper dispensers



Water Closet Location and Clearance

Clearance

Clear floor space at water closets provides room for wheelchair positioning and transfer, including side transfers. Lavatories and other fixtures cannot overlap this space. Besides the water closet, only grab bars, dispensers, and, where provided, coat hooks or shelves can overlap this clearance.

Centerline

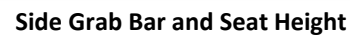
Water closets can be placed to provide either a left-hand or right-hand approach. The specified centerline (16"-18") does not permit any additional construction tolerance.



Design Tip: Specify to the midpoint of the range (17") to accommodate any construction variations up to 1" plus or minus.

The water closet seat must be 17" - 19" high, measured to the top of the seat. This height approximates the standard seat height of wheelchairs and facilitates transfer.

Grab bars are required on the side and back of water closets. They can be separate or continuous. Where codes require a flush control location that conflicts with the rear grab bar, it can be split or shifted to the open side.

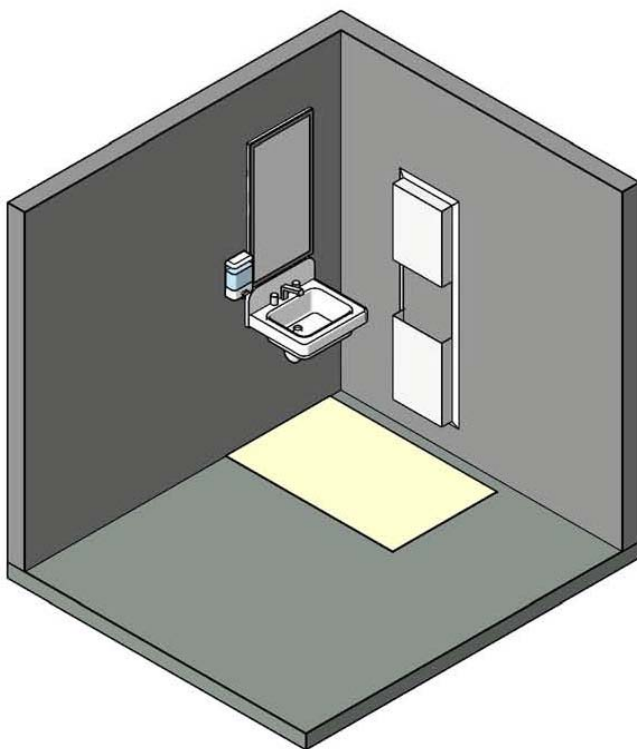


So as not to interfere with use of the side grab bar, toilet paper dispensers that are not recessed must be located at least 1½" below and at least 12" above the grab bar.

Diagram illustrating the required grab bar clearance and mounting dimensions:

- Required Grab Bar Clearance:** Indicated by a red rectangular area above the grab bar.
- 1 1/2" min:** Minimum clearance from the wall to the mounting bracket.
- 12" min:** Minimum clearance from the mounting bracket to the grab bar.
- 15" min:** Minimum clearance from the floor to the mounting bracket.
- 7" - 9":** Recommended height range for the grab bar mounting.





Lavatories and Mirrors [§603.3 and §606]

Features of accessible lavatories include:

- wheelchair space with sufficient clearance for knees and toes
- accessible fixture and mirror heights
- faucet controls and dispensers that are accessible and within reach
- pipes that are insulated or protected from contact

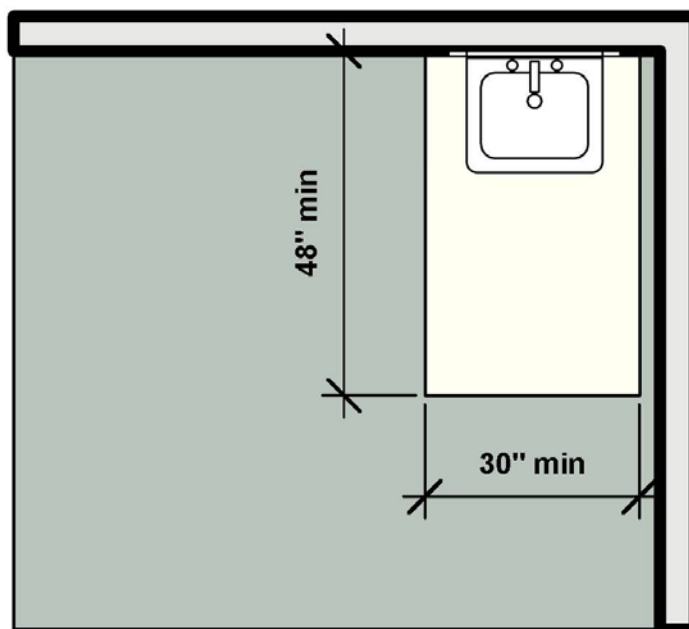
Clear Floor Space

Wheelchair space at lavatories must underlap the fixture by 17" minimum (up to 25"). This clear floor space should be centered on the fixture.

Lavatories must have a horizontal depth 17" minimum.



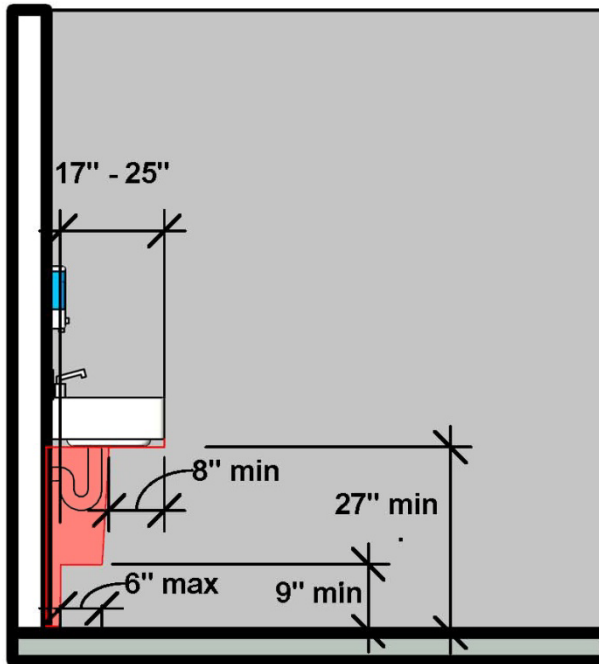
Design Tip: Avoid lavatories with a horizontal depth significantly greater than standard. They consume more space and require a greater reach to faucet controls and soap dispensers.



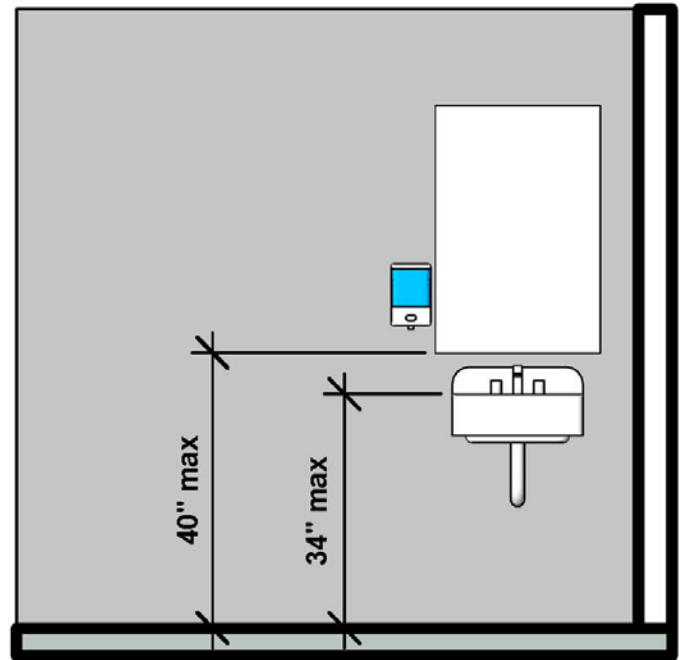
Lavatory Clear Floor Space

Knee and Toe Clearances

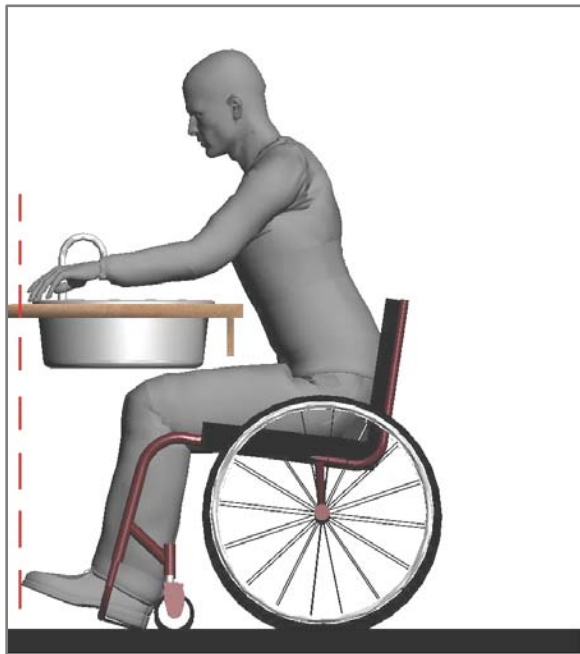
Clearances below the fixture are specified to accommodate knees and toes. The initial knee clearance must be at least 27" high and 8" deep minimum. Beyond the 8" depth, the clearance may reduce to a height of 9" at a depth of at least 11". This clearance can slope at a maximum ratio of 6:1. Toe space at least 9" high can count for 6" maximum of the clear floor space, measured from the leading edge of the clear floor space. (See the Guide on Space Requirements and Clearances.)



Knee and Toe Clearances



Lavatory and Mirror Height



Forward Reach (Relative to Toes)

Height of Lavatories and Mirrors

The maximum height of lavatories is 34" measured to the rim or counter surface (whichever is higher). The bottom edge of mirrors above lavatories must be 40" maximum or 35" maximum if not located above lavatories.

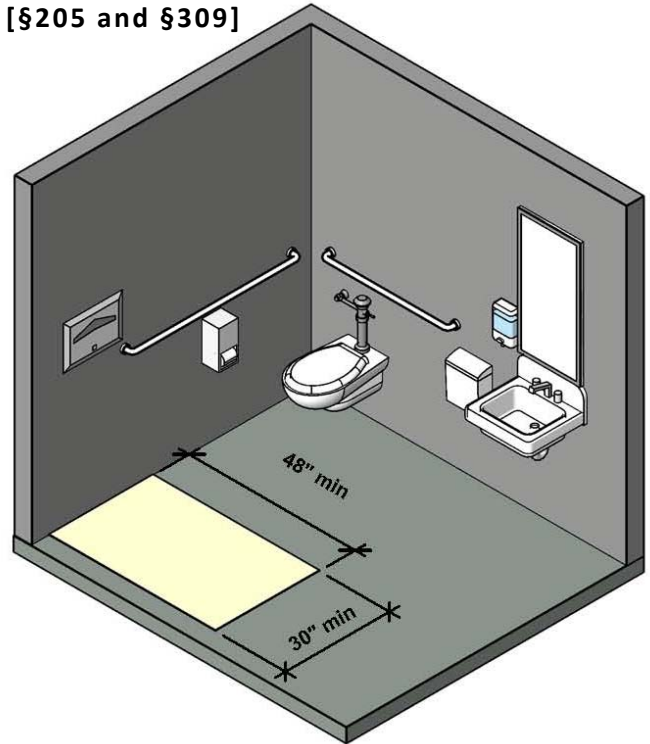
Reach at Lavatories

The forward reach from a wheelchair seat does not typically extend far beyond the toes. Faucet controls and the operable portions of soap and other dispensers at lavatories must be located above, not beyond, the usable knee and toe space below the fixture.

Dispensers, Receptacles and Other Elements [\$205 and §309]

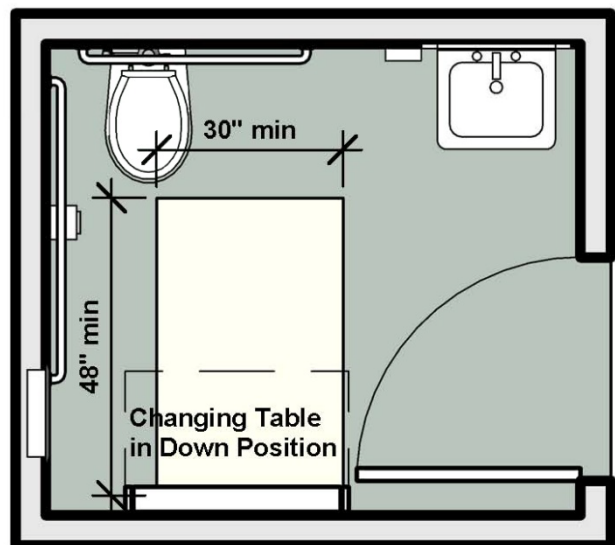
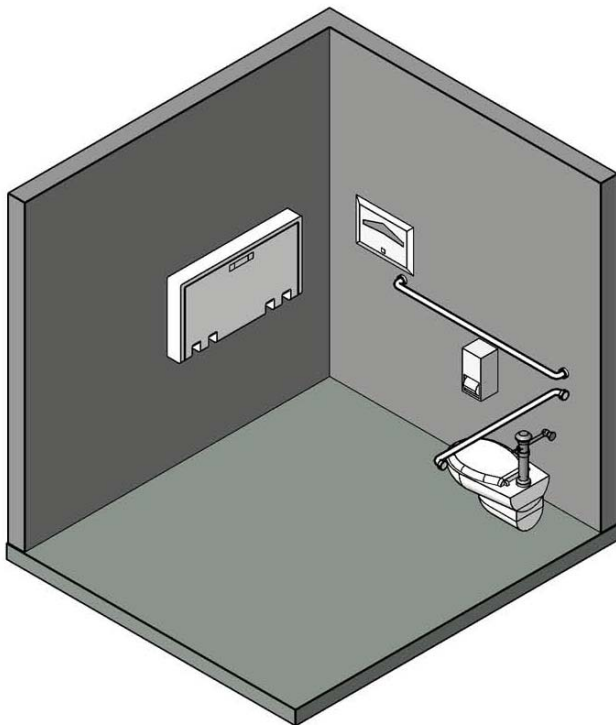
Access to dispensers, receptacles, coat hooks, shelves, and other provided elements includes:

- Clear wheelchair space for either a forward or side approach
- Location within accessible reach ranges of 15" to 48" (the maximum may be less where reaches are obstructed)
- Operating forces no more than 5 pounds
- One-hand operation without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist



Baby Changing Tables

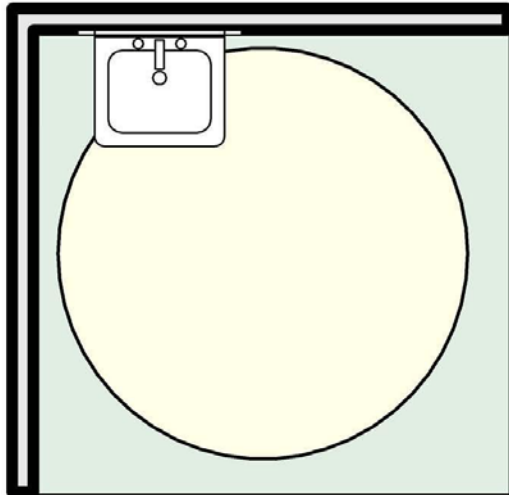
Where baby changing tables are provided, they must be accessible while not obstructing access to other fixtures or elements. They must be located so that they do not overlap minimum fixture and door clearances (in the closed position). To be accessible, clear floor space unobstructed by other fixtures must be available at the table in the down position, preferably oriented for a forward approach.



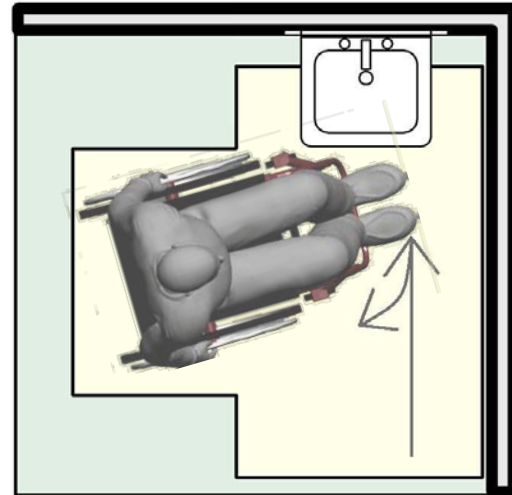
Clear Floor Space at Baby Changing Table

Turning Space [§304 and §603]

Turning space can be provided as a 60" minimum diameter circle or T-shaped space. Fixtures with knee and toe clearance can overlap turning space. Such overlap should be minimized if not wholly avoided. In the case of T-shaped space, fixture overlap can only occur on one segment of the "T" since the other segments must accommodate approach and back-up maneuvering.



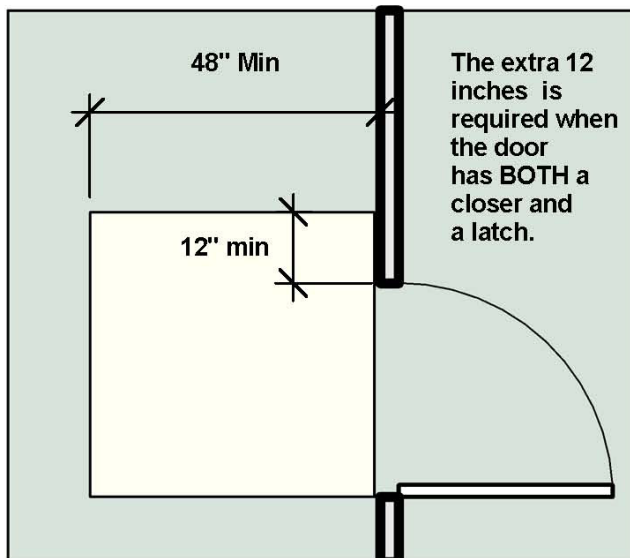
Turning Circle



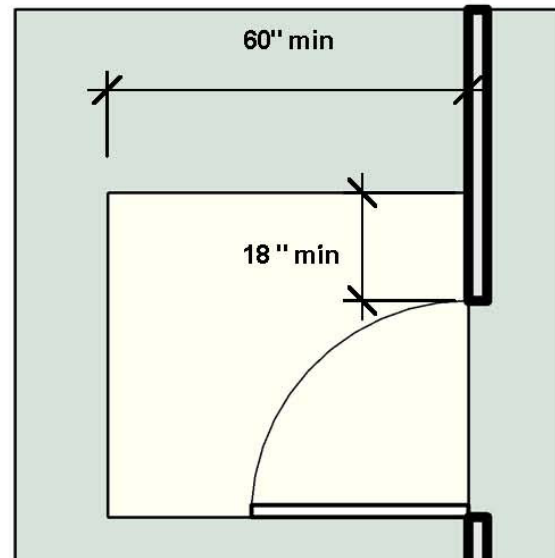
T-Shaped Turning Space

Doors [§404 and §603]

Maneuvering clearances at doors are specified by the swing and approach. Door clearances are specified according to the swing of doors and the approach direction (forward, latch-side, or hinge side). Doors can swing into the turning space in toilet rooms. They can only swing into fixture clearances if wheelchair space is available outside the door swing. Door maneuvering clearances can overlap fixture clearances and turning space.



Forward Door Clearance: Push Side



Forward Door Clearance: Pull Side

Other Components of Toilet Rooms

Urinals [§213.3 and §605]

Access to urinals is required only where more than one is provided in a toilet room. If a urinal is provided in a single user toilet room, access is recommended, but not required. (See the Guide to Multi-User Toilet Rooms.)



Visual Alarms [§215 and §702]

In facilities with emergency warning systems, visible appliances are required in all public and common use spaces, including toilet rooms. In addressing the technical specifications for visible and audible alarms, the standards reference the NFPA 72 National Fire Alarm Code (the 1999 or 2002 editions). (See the Alarms Guide for further information.)

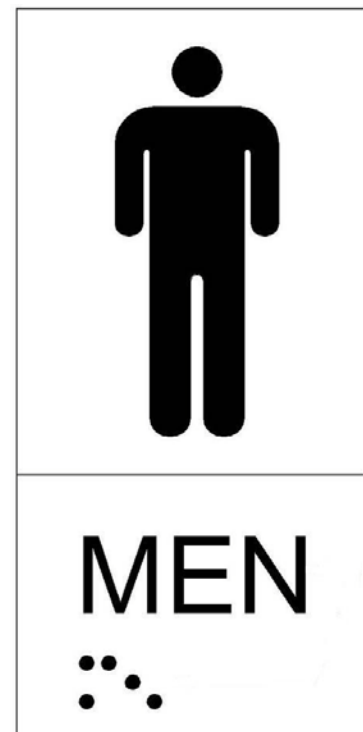
Signs [§216 and §703]

Signs labeling toilet rooms must be tactile and visually accessible. Sign specifications in the standards address raised characters, Braille, pictograms, sign location at doors, and visual legibility. Though not required by the standards, but possibly other codes or regulations, pictograms labeling toilet rooms (e.g., men, women, and unisex symbols) must include the text equivalent in raised letters and Braille and be located on a field at least 6" high. These requirements do not apply to informational pictograms, such as the access symbol. All pictograms, including access and other informational types, must meet specifications for finish and contrast.

Identification of Accessible Toilet Rooms

The access symbol is required to designate toilet rooms only in situations where some toilet rooms are inaccessible. In new construction, this is permissible only where single user toilet rooms or portable units are clustered at a single location, in which case only a portion are required to be accessible. If not all are accessible in a cluster, those that are must be identified by the access symbol.

In alterations, if some but not all toilet rooms are made accessible, similar identification is required. Plus, directional signage with the access symbol must be provided at inaccessible toilet rooms. (See the Signage Guide.)



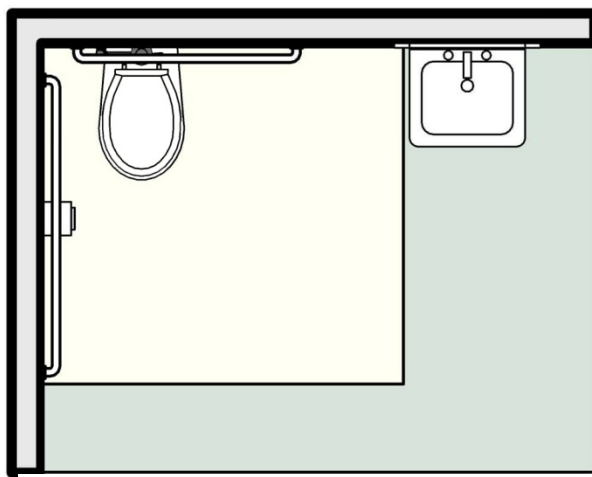
Men's Room Label
(raised letters, Braille, and optional pictogram)

SAMPLE TOILET ROOMS [§603]

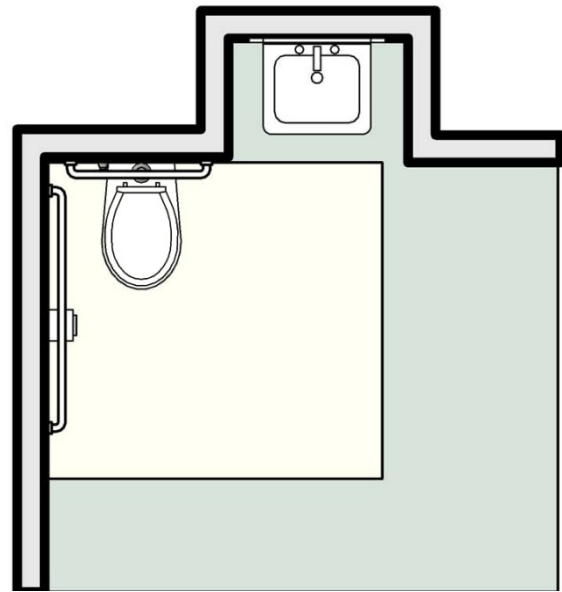
Accessible toilet rooms can be designed and configured in many different ways. Common layouts are shown here to illustrate how requirements in the standards apply and interrelate. Various factors determine minimum room dimensions, such as the number and configuration of fixtures and the swing of doors.

Water Closets and Lavatories

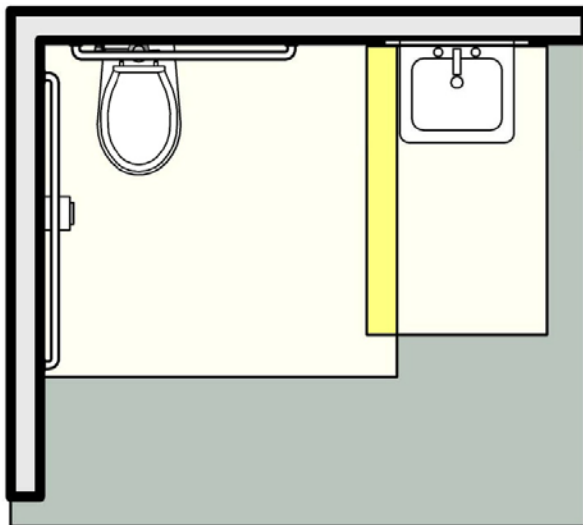
Water closets can be placed in any corner. So that space is available for side transfers, lavatories cannot overlap the water closet clearance. Lavatories can be recessed to save space. To facilitate recessing, the standards permit a shorter back grab bar (24" minimum) centered on the water closet.



Water Closet Clearance and Lavatory



Alternative: Recessed Lavatory
(24" min. rear grab bar permitted)



Overlap of Water Closet and Lavatory Clearances

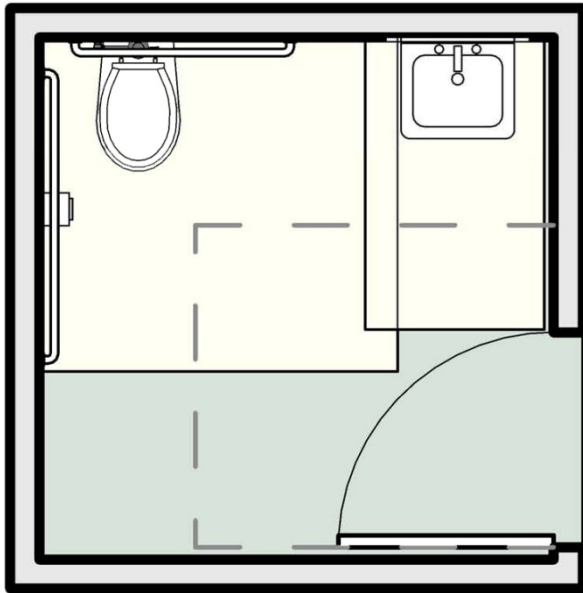
Clear floor space at lavatories should be centered. This space can overlap the clearance at water closets.



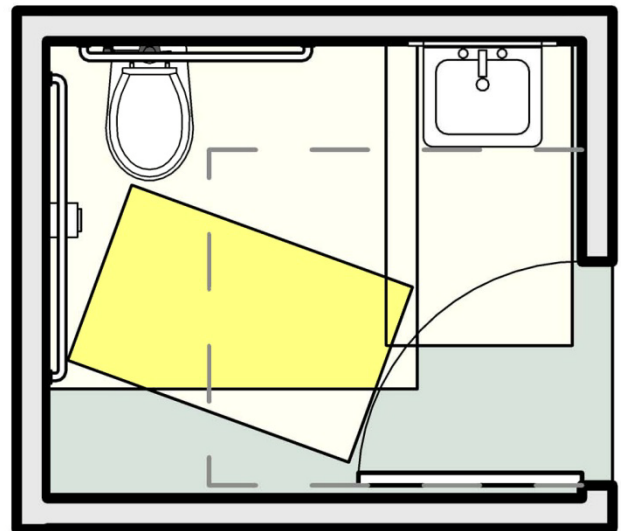
Design Tip: The standards specify *minimum* space dimensions. While demands on space often result in the minimum becoming in reality the maximum, providing additional space in toilet rooms beyond that specified enhances usability for all.

Doors

Doors can swing into the turning space. They can swing into fixture clearances only where wheelchair space 30" by 48" minimum is available in the room beyond the arc of the door swing. This ensures sufficient space beyond the door to close it.



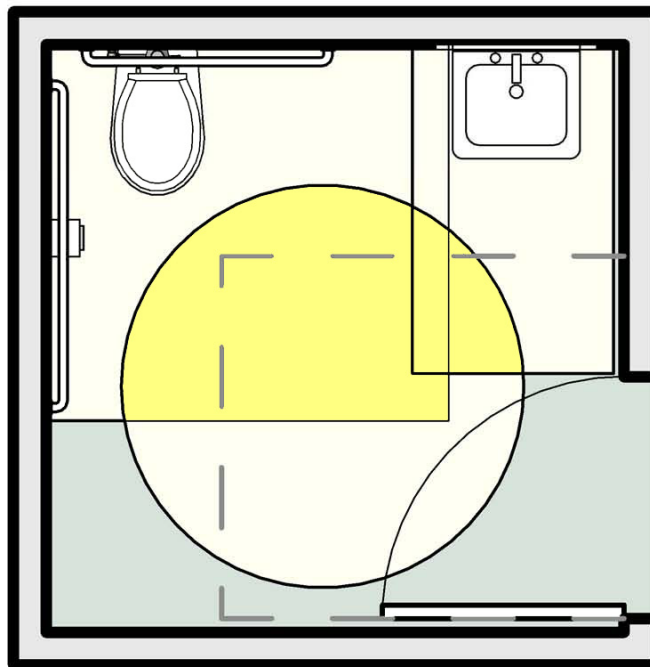
Door Swing Clear of Fixture Clearances



Alternative: Wheelchair Space (30" x 48" min.)
Available Outside Door Swing

Turning Space

Turning space (circle or T-turn) can overlap fixture and door clearances. Fixtures with knee and toe clearance below can overlap portions of the wheelchair space, though it is recommended that this be avoided or minimized.

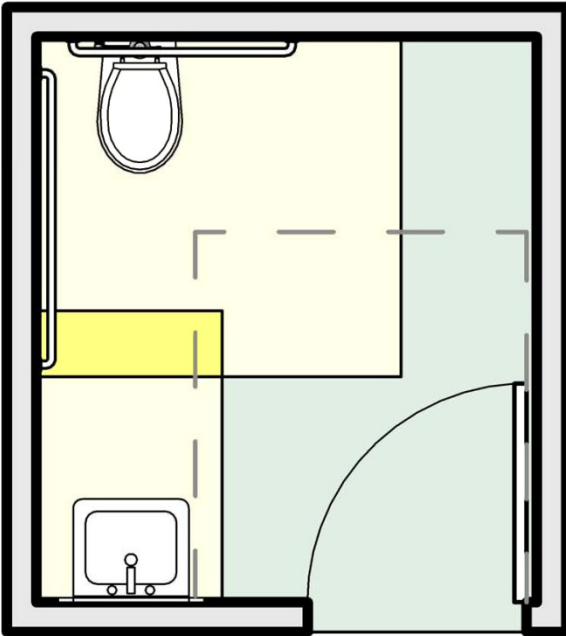


Turning Space

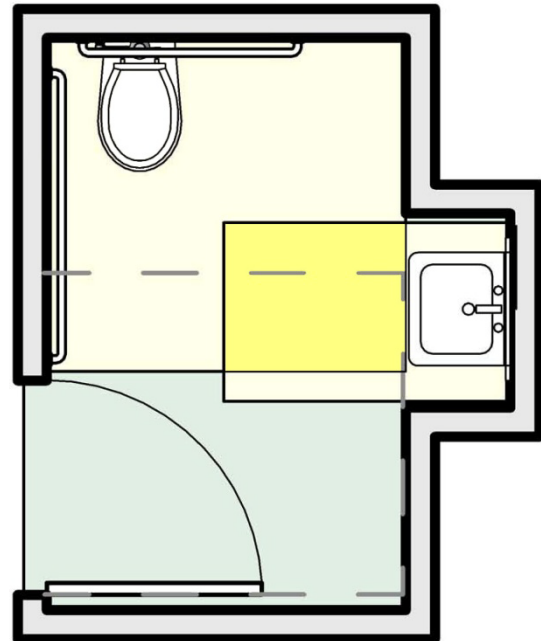
Other Layouts

Many different room layouts are possible. In all cases, the accessibility specifications must be met, including:

- required clearances at all fixtures and elements
- door maneuvering clearances
- fixture clearances (or wheelchair space) provided outside door swing
- turning space



Sample Layout: Lavatory Opposite Water Closet
(turning space not shown)



Sample Layout: Recessed Lavatory on Side Wall
(turning space not shown)

COMMON QUESTIONS

Are toilet rooms for employee use required to be accessible?

Yes. All public and common use toilet rooms, including those used exclusively by employees, must be accessible in new construction or where they are altered. Private toilet rooms for a single occupant accessed only through a private office are permitted certain adaptable access features.

What is the minimum size of toilet rooms?

The standards do not specify the minimum size of toilet rooms which is determined by various factors, including room layout, the number and configuration of fixtures, and the swing of doors, among others. Sample room layouts discussed above show how these requirements are to be met.

Can doors swing into turning space and fixture clearances?

Doors can swing into the turning space. They can only swing into the clear floor space required at plumbed fixtures, if wheelchair space (30" by 48" minimum) is provided beyond the arc of the door swing.

Can adjacent lavatories overlap the clear floor space at water closets?

No, lavatories are not permitted to overlap the 60" wide minimum space at water closets, except in residential dwelling units (provided the depth of the water closet clearance is 66" minimum). See 604.3.2, Exception.

How can conflicts between the rear grab bar and the required location of flush controls be resolved?

If plumbing codes require a flush control location that conflicts with the rear grab bar, the grab bar may be split or shifted to the open side. This is permitted only where applicable codes mandate flush controls in such a location.

Is a vertical grab bar required at the water closet?

Not by the ADA or ABA standards. However, the ANSI A117.1 access standard, which is referenced by the International Building Code, requires such a vertical grab bar and specifies its dimensions and location.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Related technical guides in this series include:

- Multi User Toilet Rooms
- Children's Toilet Rooms
- Bathing Facilities
- Sinks and Lavatories
- Grab Bars

See also guides on:

- Building Blocks
- Signs
- Alarms
- Residential Facilities
- Medical Care Facilities



View an animation on toilet room access
at www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/.

Technical Assistance and Guidance

Further information and guidance is available from the Access Board through its toll-free help line, or by email and fax:

(800) 872-2253 (v) (800) 993-2822 (TTY) Fax: (202) 272-0081 Email: ta@access-board.gov
www.access-board.gov



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